

The Washington Merry-Go-Round

THE WASHINGTON POST Tuesday, January 23, 1962 B23

# Should the Military Be Muzzled?

By Drew Pearson

The American people should get interesting insight, beginning today, into those who are looking over President Kennedy's shoulder trying to tell him when, how and where to start a war.

For today a Senate subcommittee under Sen. John Stennis of Mississippi begins probing the charges of whether the Kennedy Administration has been muzzling military men.

The hearing will have some glamorous aspects. Gen. Edwin Walker, who commanded United States troops at Little Rock, then resigned when he was slapped for indoctrinating his troops with John Birch ideas, has been itching to testify. But his best booster, Sen. Strom Thurmond of South Carolina, is worried over that testimony, knows that Walker took the Army Fifth Amendment when cross-examined in Germany. So Thurmond hopes to slide the General on and off the witness stand as quickly as possible before anyone can pop a question.

Then there's Adm. Arleigh Burke, a much stabler and more effective military man with a great combat record, but who suffers the failings of



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some combat officers. He forgets the Constitution, and seems to think that foreign policy is in the hands of the military.

## Preventive War Group

During the Truman Administration, Burke commanded one of the most interesting organizations ever developed by the Navy, "Operation 23," a secret publicity bureau aimed at undercutting both the Army and Air Force.

It consisted of 12 officers and 17 enlisted men, all on regular duty and officially assigned to Burke, who flooded newspapers with propaganda against the Army. Simultaneously, a secret memo turned up in the offices of Congressmen claiming that Secretary of Defense Louis Johnson and Assistant Secretary of the Air Force Symington had ordered a B-36 for personal profit.

The propaganda was so vicious and so widespread that a congressional committee investigated, and President Truman at first refused to okay Burke's promotion.

Now the same Admiral has been telling Congressmen how his speeches were censored by Defense Department and White House civilians. Of course they were. But such is the provision of the Constitution. Under our system of government, military men are not spokesmen for the direction of foreign affairs.

Significantly, most of these

military men who have been trying to tell Msrs. Truman and Eisenhower and Kennedy how to run civilian matters don't have confidence in the democratic form of government or the capitalistic system. Their solution is preventive war.

These are some of the people now looking over Mr. Kennedy's shoulder.

## Over Mr. K.'s Shoulder

Looking over Khrushchev's shoulder during recent weeks have been an assortment of Stalinists, Molotov-champions and Red Chinese sympathizers who have been telling him what the preventive-war right-wingers in the United States have been telling Mr. Kennedy in reverse—namely, that communism can't succeed unless there is war with capitalism.

The argument inside the Kremlin, according to usually accurate diplomatic reports, has been so hectic that Communist leaders in Poland talked to the American embassy in Warsaw to urge that President Kennedy make a move to help out Khrushchev. They wanted a gesture from the West to show the Stalinist right-wingers that peaceful co-existence, as preached by Khrushchev, can succeed.

On one side, Stalinists argued that the Russian people are becoming too absorbed in better housing, better clothes and the capitalistic things of life; that they had

to be constantly whipped up into fear of the capitalist aggressors in order to make the sacrifices necessary to communism. Unless people constantly are harassed by hate and fear of capitalism, Stalin long had argued, they will not remain dedicated, devoted Communists.

To use Molotov's exact words, given in a letter to the October Communist Party Congress: "Without serious conflict, without war, advance toward communism is impossible."

Last summer, Khrushchev told me of previous arguments with Molotov, his claims to Molotov that atomic war is unthinkable, his belief that the Russian people should be given a chance to improve their living standards, and that the Communist-capitalist worlds could exist together side by side. According to all reports from Moscow last week, the debate is still continuing.

These are the men who are looking over Khrushchev's shoulder.

When you consider that Mr. Kennedy has to prove to the American right wing that he is not soft on communism, while Khrushchev has to prove to the Stalinist right wing that he is not soft on capitalism, you can understand why the negotiations over Berlin are difficult.

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